

Message Text

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11
ACTION ITF-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 SR-02 ORM-01 VO-03 SCA-01 INSE-00

AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 PA-01 PRS-01 INR-07

(ISO) W

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O R 040415Z MAY 75
FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2464
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 1819

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF
SUBJECT: VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

REF: A. STATE 100679
B. SINGAPORE 1818

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

1. EMBASSY HAS LEARNED OF ARRIVAL IN SINGAPORE WATERS OF FIVE
ADDITIONAL SHIPS CARRYING VIETNAMESE REFUGEES SINCE LAST REPORT
(REF B). ACCORDING TO GOS MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OFFICIAL, TOTAL
NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES NOW PRESENT IN SINGAPORE (VIRTUALLY
ALL ON SHIPS IN SINGAPORE TERRITORIAL WATERS) IS APPROXIMATELY
2,300.

2. ON EVENING OF MAY 2 VIETNAMESE MERCHANT VESSEL, DAI DUONG,
CARRYING 822 CATHOLIC REFUGEES WAS INTERCEPTED BY SINGAPORE NAVY
CRAFT OFF HORSBURG LIGHTHOUSE. VESSELS CABLED NOTICE OF ARRIVAL
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AND REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO ARCHBISHOP OF SINGAPORE. ARCHBISHOP

CONTACTED FRENCH EMBASSY, WHICH IS REPORTED ASSISTING WITH RELIEF EFFORT INCLUDING PROVISION OF FOOD AND WATER SUPPLIES. GOS MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND NAVY ALSO INVOLVED IN RELIEF EFFORTS AND THIS GROUP OF REFUGEES APPARENTLY ADEQUATELY LOOKED AFTER FOR TIME BEING. HOWEVER, GOS HAS NOT YET ALLOWED REFUGEES TO DISEMBARK OR LAND AT ST. JOHN'S ISLAND QUARANTINE FACILITY.

3. ANOTHER VESSEL (NAME AND TYPE UNKNOWN) CARRYING 243 REFUGEES ARRIVED OFF CHANGI POINT AFTERNOON OF MAY 3. VESSEL ANCHORED NEAR VIETNAMESE MERCHANT SHIP (DONG HAI) CARRYING 300 REFUGEES WHICH ARRIVED MAY 2 (REF B). REFUGEES STILL ABOARD BOTH VESSELS, AND LOCAL SHIPPING AGENT (LIDA TRADING COMPANY) FOR THESE TWO VESSELS INFORMED EMBASSY THAT GOS NOT LIKELY TO MAKE DECISION BEFORE MAY 5 WHETHER OR NOT TO ALLOW THEM TO LAND AT ST. JOHNS. AGENT HAS BEEN ABLE TO PROVIDE WATER BUT NO FOOD AND IS CONTINUING TO PRESS GOS TO ALLOW REFUGEES OFF SHIP OR HELP PROVIDE FOOD SUPPLIES.

4. ON MORNING OF MAY 4 SINGAPORE NAVY INTERCEPTED THREE SMALL SVN MILITARY LANDING CRAFT (TWO-200 TON AND ONE-ONE HUNDRED TON) NEAR BEDOK OFF SINGAPORE EAST COAST. VESSELS NOT BEING ALLOWED PROCEED FURTHER TOWARD HARBOR AT THIS TIME. NUMBER OF REFUGEES ABOARD UNKNOWN. THEY ARE REPORTED TO BE CHRISTIAN AND TO HAVE ADEQUATE SUPPLIES. NAVY HAS REPORT THAT FOURTH VESSEL MAY BE ON THE WAY.

5. MEANWHILE, SUNDAY NATION (MAY 4) PUBLISHED PHOTOGRAPH OF SIX SHIPS WITH FOLLOWING CAPTION - "VIETNAMESE SHIPS SIGHTED OFF CHANGI YESTERDAY". STORY RELATED TO PHOTOGRAPH SAID "EIGHT VIETNAMESE SHIPS WERE SDSTERDAY SIGHTED 10 MILES OFF CHANGI BEACH. ARMED TROOPS WERE SEEN ABOARD".

6. COMMENT: IN EFFORT TO RECONCILE CONFLICTING FIGURES EMBASSY ATTEMPTING DISCREETLY TO DETERMINE TOTAL NUMBER OF SHIPS AND REFUGEES INVOLVED. BELEIVE GOS IS IN THROES OF MAKING A POLICY DECISION ON HOW TO DEAL WITH THIS NEW INFLUX OF REFUGEES AND IS LIKELY TO APPROACH EMBASSY SOONEST TO DETERMINE WHETHER USG PREPARED TO BE HELPFUL.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT, REFUGEE RELIEF
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SINGAP01819
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750156-0437
From: SINGAPORE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750582/aaaacwya.tel
Line Count: 99
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ITF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 100679
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 JUL 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <14 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VIETNAMESE REFUGEES
TAGS: SREF, VS, SN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006